

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 CEA-01

COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-04 LAB-04 SIL-01

SAM-01 /107 W

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R 101736Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3828

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 0150

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

USMISSION USUN

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EEC, FR

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SUBJECT: THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AS AN INTERNAL ISSUE

SUMMARY: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (EP) QUESTIONS PROMISE TO BE ONE OF THE MOST DIVISIVE ISSUES BROUGHT BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SINCE GISCARD'S ELECTION OVER TWO YEARS AGO. IT PRESENTS IN MICROCOISM ALL THE CONTRADICTIONS OF AND REVIVES ALL THE RIVALRIES WITHIN THE MAJORITY. IT WILL SIMULTANEOUSLY PUT STRESS ON THE PS/PC ALLIANCE AND COULD EVEN SPLIT THE "UNITED" LEFT ON THE FINAL VOTE. WE BELIEVE THE RESPECTIVE PARTIES WILL EVENTUALLY BACK OFF FROM THEIR PRESENT TOUGH TALK; THEY WILL EITHER FIND A WAY TO COMPROMISE OR WILL RATIONALIZE THEIR POSITIONS TO STAY WITHIN THE PRESENT LINE-UP. IN THE PROCESS, THE EP ISSUE WILL GET A NEEDED AIRING IN FRANCE AND SHOULD GIVE A PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST TO POPULAR INTEREST IN THE EUROPEAN UNIFICATION EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ELYSEE STRATEGY ON PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE. WE LEAVE ASIDE THE COMPLICATED ISSUE OF WHETHER THE BRUSSELS AGREEMENT OF JULY 13 NEEDS FRENCH RATIFICATION AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE ROME TREATY, WHETHER ONLY APPROVAL BY PARLIAMENT IS NECESSARY OR WHETHER NOTHING MORE IS NECESSARY TO BECOME EFFECTIVE. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, GISCARD HAS LET IT BE UNDERSTOOD THAT HE INTENDS TO INTRODUCE A BILL ON THE SUBJECT, EITHER THIS FALL OR IN SPRING 1977, AND INDEED IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY UNWISE NOT TO DO SO. THE LATTER COURSE COULD PROVOKE A PLEA BEFORE THE CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL ON THE RATIFICATION ISSUE AND RISK AN UNFAVORABLE DECISION. GISCARD NOT ONLY INTENDS TO INITIATE A DEBATE ON THE EP IN PARLIAMENT BUT HOPES TO (A) RAISE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS ON THIS ISSUE AND IN THIS WAY SENSITIZE FRANCE TO OTHER EUROPEAN ISSUES IN THE FUTURE; (B) BUILD UP HIS OWN REPUTATION AS ONE OF THE LEADERS, IF NOT THE MAIN LEADER, OF AN EC WHICH HE FEELS IS GRADUALLY OVERCOMING THE MANY OBSTACLES TO A UNIFIED EUROPE; AND (C) RALLY, AT LEAST ON THIS ISSUE, SOCIALISTS AND OTHER PRO-EUROPEAN DEPUTIES TO HIS SIDE ON THIS PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE.

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2. THIS IMPRESSION WAS REINFORCED BY CONVERSATION WITH ELYSEE INTERNATIONAL STAFF AND QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR EC AFFAIRS DUFOURCQ. BOTH SAID GOF WAS CALM AND CONFIDENT ABOUT DOMESTIC PROSPECTS OF EC PARLIAMENTARY ISSUE, ALTHOUGH THEY EXPECT SOUND AND FURY IN THE PRESS AND PARLIAMENT. THE KEY ASSUMPTION IS THAT THE UK WILL COMMIT ITSELF TO KEEPING TO THE 1978 ELECTION DATE. ONCE THAT HURDLE IS PAST,

PRESUMABLY BY END OF OCTOBER 1976, GISCARD WILL BE ABLE TO CONFRONT PARLIAMENT WITH THE FACT THAT FAILURE TO APPROVE THE COUNCIL DECISION WOULD AGAIN MAKE FRANCE THE ODD-MAN-OUT IN EUROPE. GISCARD SEEMS CONFIDENT THAT, AFTER CONSIDERABLE HUFFING AND PUFFING, THE UDR WILL NOT HAVE COURAGE IN THE END TO FRUSTRATE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. THE ELYSEE IS THEREFORE REASONABLY CONFIDENT IT WILL PREVAIL; OTHERS, HOWEVER, AS WILL BE SEEN BELOW, ARE LESS SANGUINE. IN ANY CASE, THE RECENT APPOINTMENT AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ELYSEE JEAN FRANCOIS-PONCET, A PRO-EUROPEAN ACTIVIST FOR THE LAST 20 YEARS AND A MORE POLITICALLY ENGAGED PERSONALITY THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, WILL INCREASE THE MUSCLE AT THE ELYSEE IN LOBBYING FOR THE BILL.

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R 101736Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3829

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 0151

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY MADRID
USMISSION NATO
USNMR SHAPE
USMISSION USUN
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
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3. WHERE THE PARTIES STAND.

(A) CENTRISTS AND MOST INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS (GISCARDIANS) WILL FORM THE NUCLEUS OF THE BLOC IN FAVOR OF THE BILL; THEY BEING 120-STRONG IN THE ASSEMBLY. CENTRISTS ESPECIALLY HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF HOLDING PRO-EUROPEAN VIEWS, AND INDEED THEY AGREED TO JOIN THE MAJORITY IN 1974 PARTLY ON ASSURANCES BY GISCARD THAT THE GOF WOULD WORK FOR EUROPEAN UNIFICATION. SOME ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE DEPUTIES IN THE IR, HOWEVER, MAY JOIN THE RIGHT WING OF THE UDR IN OPPOSING THE EP.

(B) THE UDR (GAULLISTS) WILL BE NOISY IN CRITICIZING THE BILL AND WILL GET HEADLINES, AS ONLY THE UDR CAN. FORMER PRIME MINISTER MICHEL DEBRE HAS ALREADY SUBMITTED THE GOVERNMENT A QUESTION ASKING WHAT PROCEDURE THE GOF PROPOSES TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION. UDR SECRETARY GENERAL YVES GUENA WAS MORE CAREFUL IN DESCRIBING HIS PARTY'S OFFICIAL POSITION BUT LEFT NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY BY GISCARD. GUENA ATTACKED THE BRUSSELS ACCORD FOR NOT PROVIDING COUNTRY REPRESENTATION ON A STRICT BASIS OF POPULATION, WARNED AGAINST GIVING SUPRA-NATIONAL POWERS TO THE EP AND CONCLUDED THAT "THE DESTINY OF FRANCE IS TO BE DECIDED IN PARIS, NOT BRUSSELS." A UDR EXECUTIVE BUREAU DECISION LAST MARCH ALSO CALLED FOR IDENTICAL VOTING PROCEDURES IN ALL PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AND THE VOTE TO BE HELD ON THE SAME DAY.

(C) THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS EVEN MORE HOSTILE TO THE EP. IN THE WORDS OF THE PC "FOREIGN MINISTER" JEAN KANAPA THE EP WILL HAVE THE APPEARANCE OF DEMOCRACY BECAUSE VOTED BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, BUT IN REALITY "A FOREIGN MAJORITY--AND A REACTIONARY ONE TO BOOT--WOULD BE ABLE TO IMPOSE ITS WILL ON FRANCE. THIS IS AN INADMISSIBLE BLOW TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF FRANCE." THE PC POLITICAL BUREAU ADDS THAT THE EP WOULD "OPEN THE DOOR TO POLITICAL DOMINATION BY WEST GERMAN IMPERIALISM OVER THE NINE." COMMENT: CONFIDENTIAL

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WEST GERMANY IS OFTEN IN PCF PARLANCE THE CODEWORD FOR THE U.S.

(D) THE SOCIALISTS (PS) HAVE BEEN CONTENT TO RIDE ON THEIR LONG-STANDING REPUTATION AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EP AND ADVOCATES OF EUROPEAN UNIFICATION. THEY HAVE BEEN RESERVED IN THEIR OFFICIAL STATEMENTS TO DATE, HOLDING THEIR FIRE FOR THE DEBATE AND SEEMINGLY ANXIOUS TO MINIMIZE THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THEIR PCF PARTNERS. NEVERTHELESS, FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERT ROBERT PONTILLON AND DEFENSE EXPERT CHARLES HERNU HAVE BOTH VOICED THEIR FAVOR FOR AN EP WHICH IS ELECTED EQUITABLY AND PROPORTIONALLY. THIS POSITION IS A GENERAL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE EP WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY COMING OUT FOR GISCARD BY NAME AND IS ALSO AN ALLUSION TO THE TRADITIONAL PS BELIEF IN PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN FRENCH NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

4. A NEW MAJORITY? THE NEW IR NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS (FRANCIS DORE) RECENTLY WROTE AN ARTICLE IN LE MONDE WHICH HAS BEEN INTERPRETED BY SOME AS CORRESPONDING TO THE SECRET WISHES OF THE PRESIDENT: NAMELY, THAT THE EP ISSUE BE USED TO FORCE THE PARTIES ABOVE TO VOTE, IF THEY ARE TO REMAIN TRUE TO THEIR BELIEFS, IN SUCH A WAY AS TO IMPLY A POSSIBLE DE FACTO NEW MAJORITY. THIS SO-CALLED THIRD-FORCE WOULD BE MADE UP OF THE IR, CENTER AND ELEMENTS OF THE UDR AND PS; IT WOULD OPEN THE PROSPECT OF GISCARD BEING ABLE SOME DAY TO GOVERN FROM THE POLITICAL CENTER, AS HE HAS OFTEN EXPRESSED A WISH TO DO. IT WOULD ALSO CONVENIENTLY ISOLATE THE PC IN ITS OPPOSITION TO THE EP AND EITHER CONDEMN THE UDR TO THE SAME FATE OR DIVIDE IT, IN WHICH CASE IT WOULD EMERGE FROM THE PROCESS MUCH WEAKENED. IT IS POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE TEMPTATION OF SOME OF THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISERS TO USE THE EP ISSUE AS AN EXERCISE IN A POSSIBLE RECASTING OF ROLES OF THE

FRENCH POLITICAL ACTORS. THESE ADVISERS CAN BE
COUNTED UPON TO:
-- BLAME THE UDR FOR BLOCKING VGE'S REFORM PROGRAM
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FOR TWO YEARS AND RESENT THE UDR'S STRENGTH IN THE
ASSEMBLY;

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PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 CEA-01

COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-04 LAB-04 SIL-01

SAM-01 /107 W
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R 101736Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3830
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 0152
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY MADRID
USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE
USMISSION USUN
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
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-- REMEMBER PS (AND PC) SUPPORT FOR GISCARD'S
ABORTION AND DIVORCE REFORM TWO YEARS AGO AND WISH TO
SEE ADDITIONAL OCCASIONS OF SUCH COMPLIMENTARY VOTING;

-- HOPE THAT PS PARTICIPATION IN THE EP, SITTING
ALONGSIDE NORTHERN SOCIALISTS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS,
WILL LEAD TO A MORE MODERATE PS AND AN EVENTUAL
LOOSENING OF TIES WITH THE PCF.

5. THE PRESENT LINE-UP WILL HOLD. WHILE THE EP
SEEMS TO LEND ITSELF TO SUCH MANEUVERS, THERE ARE
MANY PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH ARGUE AGAINST
ATTACHING TOO HIGH EXPECTATIONS TO IT. FIRST,
THE EP IS NOT YET, AND MAY NOT BECOME, AN ISSUE
OF PREEMINENT IMPORTANCE TO CREATE PUBLIC OPINION
PRESSURES TO COMPEL PARTIES TO BEHAVE ACCORDING TO
PRINCIPLE. THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO OTHER ISSUES WHICH
WILL BE AS HEATEDLY DEBATED AS THE EP: CORPORATE
REFORM AND THE BUDGET, WHICH ARE LIKELY TO DETRACT
ATTENTION FROM THE EP. SECOND, THERE IS A FEELING
AMONG MOST POLITICIANS THAT EUROPE WILL NOT BE CON-
STRUCTED OVERNIGHT. AS ONE UDR MINISTER SAID, "FOR
A LONG TIME STILL, EUROPE WILL CONTINUE TO BE
STYMIED BY BRITISH HADDOCK AND ITALIAN OLIVE OIL."
THIRD, GISCARD HAS NOT SHOWN DURING HIS PRESIDENCY
THE DARING THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR SUCH AN
ENDEAVOR. BETWEEN PRESERVING HIS MAJORITY AS IT IS
PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED AND REACHING OUT TO THE
OPPOSITION FOR SUPPORT, HE HAS INVARIABLY CHOSEN THE
FORMER. FINALLY, THE SWING-PARTIES THEMSELVES (THE
UDR AND PS), DESPITE THEIR DOCTRINAL PREFERENCES,
HAVE MORE REASON TO STAY WHERE THEY ARE THAN TO
CHANGE SIDES.

(A) AS MUCH AS THE UDR MAY TALK ABOUT REMAINING

TRUE TO ITS GAULLIST BELIEFS AND IMPLY GOING INTO
OPPOSITION TO CERTAIN GISCARDIAN POLICIES, THERE IS
GREAT HESITATION IN ITS RANKS TO MAKING SUCH A
PLUNGE. ITS VIEWS MAY COINCIDE WITH THOSE OF THE
PCF ON CERTAIN ISSUES, BUT IT IS MORE A QUESTION OF
COINCIDENCE THAN PLAN. EVEN A FORTUITOUS ALLIANCE
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WITH THE PCF WOULD BE UNCOMFORTABLE FOR THE UDR. IN
PRACTICAL TERMS, THE ROLE OF THE UDR PRIME
MINISTER WILL BE CRUCIAL--WHETHER HE BE CHIRAC OR
ANOTHER PERSON. DELIVERING 90 PERCENT OF THE UDR
VOTE AS CHIRAC DID ON CAPITAL GAINS AND ELECTION RE-
FORM (PARIS 17324 AND 19923) WILL BE AT LEAST AS
DIFFICULT ON THE EP, BUT CERTAIN ACCOMMODATIONS
COULD HELP PREPARE THE WAY FOR ITS ACQUIESCENCE.
DEBRE AND OTHERS WILL LET OFF STEAM AND ASSUAGE THEIR
CONSCIENCE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN TRUE TO THE GENERAL
AND TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF FRANCE. THE UDR CAN
RECEIVE ASSURANCES FROM THE PRESIDENT THAT THE EP'S
POWERS ARE NOT TO BE EXPANDED IN THE FORESEEABLE
FUTURE, AND THE UDR CAN BE SHOWN THAT FRANCE ACTUALLY
DID BETTER THAN SOME OTHER COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF
DEPUTIES PER POPULATION. AND, FINALLY, "CHIRACISTS",
WHO MAKE UP AT LEAST 50 PERCENT OF THE UDR DEPUTIES
IN THE ASSEMBLY, WILL BE ABLE TO EXERCISE REAL
PRESSURE ON THEIR CONSERVATIVE COLLEAGUES. IN THE
FINAL ANALYSIS, MOST OF THE UDR SHOULD REALIZE IT
HAS LESS TO GAIN IN VOTING AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT
ON THE THEORETICAL ISSUES THAN IN NEGOTIATING ENOUGH
PRACTICAL ASSURANCES TO PERMIT THEMSELVES TO VOTE FOR
THE BILL.

(B) THE PS IS PERHAPS EVEN LESS UNIFIED THAN THE UDR
ON THE EP: TWO-THIRDS OF THE PS ARE GENERALLY IN
FAVOR AND ONE-THIRD ECHO THE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY FEARS
OF THE PCF. ABOVE THEIR DIFFERENCES OVER THE MERITS
OF THE EP HANGS THE QUESTION OF ITS STRATEGIC COMMIT-
MENT TO THE UNION OF THE LEFT IN OPPOSITION TO THE
GOVERNMENT. WHETHER THE PS WOULD SPLIT ITS VOTE
IN THE ASSEMBLY ALONG THE LINES OF ITS SUBSTANTIVE
PREFERENCES IS VERY MUCH AN OPEN QUESTION. PARTY
DISCIPLINE UNDER THE STRONG HAND OF FRANCOIS MITTERRAND
HAS BEEN THE RULE ON RECENT VOTES; BUT DISCIPLINE IN
WHICH DIRECTION? THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM WOULD
DICTATE THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS. A VOTE AGAINST
THE EP WOULD RUN AGAINST THE MAIN CURRENT IN THE
PARTY AND TAR IT WITH THE ANTI-EUROPEAN BRUSH. A
VOTE IN FAVOR WOULD BE PRESENTED AS A GESTURE TOWARD
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VGE AT A TIME WHEN THE PS HAS NEVER BEEN STRONGER AND
HAS NO REASON TO COMPROMISE THE LEFT'S CHANCES IN THE

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COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 CIEP-01 STR-04 LAB-04 SIL-01

SAM-01 /107 W

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R 101736Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3831

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 0153

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. ABSTAINING WOULD APPEAR TO BE ITS FACE-SAVING WAY OUT, TO PRESERVE SOME SEMBLANCE OF OPPOSITION UNITY AND NOT APPEAR TO OTHER EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS TO BE IMPEDED PROGRESS TOWARD THE EP. MITTERRAND, HOWEVER, MAY WELL RECKON THAT AN ISSUE LIKE THE EP WITH ITS INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR HIM PERSONALLY AND FOR THE PS OFFERS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PS AND PCF. HE WILL BE JUSTIFIED IN SPECULATING THAT SUCH A RESPONSIBLE AND PRINCIPLED STAND (FAVORING EP) WILL ENHANCE HIS IMAGE WITH THE FRENCH ELECTORATE, ESPECIALLY THE MORE MODERATE ELEMENTS WHICH REMAIN SUSPICIOUS OF THE PS-PC ALLIANCE. A CALCULATED DISREGARD IN MITTERRAND'S PART OF THE INTERPRETATION THAT SUCH A STAND IS A GESTURE TOWARDS Giscard COULD EVEN REINFORCE THE IMAGE THAT MITTERRAND IS SEEKING TO PROJECT OF A RESPONSIBLE LEADER. A VOTE BY MITTERRAND AND HIS FOLLOWERS, WHO CONSTITUTE THE MAJORITY OF THE PS, IN FAVOR OF THE EP CANNOT THEREFORE BE RULED OUT AT THIS TIME.

6. FUTURE PERCEPTION OF THE EP IN FRANCE. THE DYNAMICS OF THE UPCOMING ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE WILL ADD PRESSURE ON THE MAJORITY AND OPPOSITION EACH TO CLOSE RANKS AND COORDINATE THEIR ACTIONS AGAINST THE OTHER. THEY WILL EACH TRY TO PRESENT TO THE ELECTORATE, DESPITE THEIR DIVERGENCES OVER THE EP, CORPORATE REFORM, THE BUDGET AND OTHER ISSUES, AS UNIFIED AN IMAGE AS POSSIBLE. SPLITS WITHIN THEIR RANKS COULD BE TOO COSTLY. WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EP ISSUE AND EUROPEAN UNITY IN FRANCE IF, AS WE ASSUME, THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE MAJORITY AND OPPOSITION PRESERVE THEIR PRESENT ALLEGIANCES AND CONSEQUENTLY PASS THE EP BILL?

-- WHILE THE EP, ALONG WITH OTHER FOREIGN POLICY SUBJECTS, IS NOT OF BURNING INTEREST DOMESTICALLY, POLLS HAVE SHOWN THAT THE FRENCH PUBLIC IS IN FAVOR

OF THE INSTITUTION AND WOULD SUPPORT IT IF THE GOVERNMENT
AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS MOVED AHEAD. THE PARLIAMENTARY
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DEBATE AND A FAVORABLE VOTE SHOULD INCREASE AWARENESS
OF THE EP AND ADD TO ITS SUPPORT AMONG THE PUBLIC.

-- THERE HAS BEEN SOME TALK OF FIRST-LINE FRENCH
POLITICIANS, INCLUDING MITERRAND, STANDING FOR
ELECTION TO THE EP. IF THIS HAPPENS, ONE CAN EXPECT
THE EUROPEAN MOVEMENT TO RECEIVE A PSYCHOLOGICAL
BOOST, BOTH WITH THE FRENCH PUBLIC AND IN POLITICAL
CIRCLES. WHILE FRENCH OPINION IS FAR FROM THE ONLY
ELEMENT IN THIS EQUATION, MORE SUPPORT HERE SHOULD
BENEFIT UNIFICATION EFFORTS IN THE EC MORE GENERALLY.

-- IN THE MEDIUM TERM OF THE NEXT FEW YEARS THERE
WILL BE GREATER INTER-ACTION BY FRENCH DEPUTIES WITH
THEIR EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES IN THE EP. IT REMAINS TO
BE SEEN WHETHER THIS FORUM WILL LEAD TO MORE POLICY
COORDINATION AMONG LIKE-MINDED PARTIES OF THE MEMBER
COUNTRIES OR MERELY ANOTHER OCCASION TO DISAGREE.
THE RELATIONSHIPS WILL BE COMPLEX AND NO DOUBT
VARY WITH THE ISSUE, BUT THEY COULD HAVE CONSEQUENCES
ON THE BEHAVIOR AND ACTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL DEPUTIES
AND THEIR PARTIES IN THE FRENCH ASSEMBLY.

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04 MAY 2006

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